

TRANSLATION

HEINRICI DIARY

Tapes #1, #2, #3, #4

Translation - Heinrici Diary

Box 68, #4

Generaloberst Gotthard HEINRICI

Chief of Staff: General Kinzel (to April 22, 1945, then to Dönitz)

Chief of Staff: Maj.Gen.Thilo von Trotha (from April 22.

Ia Colonel in the General Staff EISMANN (Tactics and Operations)

Ib Col. von Rückert (Chief Quartermaster

Ic Col. Harnack (Intelligence)

Id Maj.Weber (Admin.)

Capt.Lang (Asst't)

Heinrici had been in Berlin in 1943. This was first time he had been back. At that time he had been General of the 4th Army at Smolensk. From 1927 to 1930 he lived in Berlin-Zehlendorf while working at the ministry of war.

Transferred to East Prussia in October 1930, then in 1932 had been transferred back to Berlin where he was Ia to von Rundstedt (32 - 33).

He was born on 25 December 1886. ✓

Went into Army 1905.

On his mother's side all his ancestors had been military. His great grandfather was Gustav Adolph's (the Swedish king's) page later a Brig.

(Note: Gustav Adolph was killed in the 30-years' war in the mid-1⁷th century)

Family was of Dutch origin, dated back to 12th century. Came to East Prussia in 17th century.

Never occurred to him that he could be anything else but a soldier.

Graduated from High School in home town of Gumbinnen. Most of ancestors on father's side were protestant ministers - except ~~for~~ his grandfather who was a landowner.

Crest - an anchor with a dove on it.

Family goes back ~~to~~ to 1125.

1905 - entered

1906 - Lt.

1910 - Batt. adjutant

1914 - passed exams war academy in Berlin. Was supposed to report Oct. 1914 but war was on so that he had to stay with his battery.

First battle was taking of Namur.

1915 - June - Captain

in the meantime had been made Regt. adjutant (95th Regt.). then became co. commander. Then because of casualties he became Battery Commander. Led battery through whole Russian war. All that was left of him, an officer and 95 men by September 1915. One Paper said "Hindenburg reached Riga with the shadow of an army and the reputation of invincibility. He thought about that.

1916 - Transferred to France where he remained as 2nd Batt. Comm.

In May 1916 Brigade Adjutant, until Sept. 1916 he remained Brig. Adj. until Verdun. In Verdun French lines were only yards away. In trenches there were heaps of bodies simply covered ~~w~~ over with earth. Sometimes you could see an arm or leg sticking out.

- Then in September 1916 transfer to General Staff, General von Geroch in the Galicia, in ~~xxxx~~ Carpathians. Great Russian offensive was on. October 1916 transferred to Hungaria. Next came staff work with von Kleist.
- 1918 - Ia 203rd Div. Div. in Hamburg.
- 1919 - February Ia in Königsberg, remained until 1924. Then became ~~C/Co.~~ Commander again in Schwäbisch-Gmünd (where Lang met him? "I'm a Prussian boy ^{You can tell from} and know my colors")
- 1926 - Major. It was a great surprise to him, wasn't simple to be a major in a 100,000 man army.
- 1927 - Berlin - Ministry of War. Remained there until 1930.
- 1930 - Lt.Col. - sent to East Prussian 3rd Batt., 3rd Army.
- 1932 - von Rundstedt's staff.
- 1933 - Colonel. War Ministry again, remained there until 1937. Then got 3rd Div. 1937.
- 1936 - General - "It wasN't a pleasure - you had to have your uniform completely remade and it was bloody expensive.
- 1938 - Lt. General (1937 - 16th Div; later became Panzer at Stalingrad)
- 1939 - Sent to Luxembourg border "Wasn't a war at all - the gendarmes were just wqlking up and down. The only horrid happening was that a Luxembourg cow by accident stepped on a mine. Villagers sued".
- 1940 - Placed in charge of 12th Corps~~th~~ at Saarbrücken. On 20th April he was made General of the Infantry (2-stars) on Hitler's birthday. Broke through Maginot line in May-June 1941. 12th ~~Corps~~ had been commanded as replacement, but in June 1941 got his own 43rd Corps. Had district. Between Seine - Chartres; LeMont St. Michel-Port En Bassin, whole Normandy area. He remembers looking out from ~~Cor~~romanches and thinking that nobody would be mad enough to land in No~~r~~mandy. In April 19~~6~~41 he went to Poland.
- 1941 - In Russia - fought all the way to south of Moscow by November 1941. They were supposed to attack December 6, 1941 - in 36° below zero weather - "most of my men froze to death".
- 1942 - 26 January called back and placed in charge of 6th Army. The order from Hitler was to hold until the big attack to take Moscow. The day he took over it was 42° below zero. They stuck it out. He should have been made a Col.General but he wasn't a protégé. "Somebody told Hitler that when I was in ^{hometown} I always went to church with my whole family - that was the end of me. I wasN't a party man either." Then came thaw and mud - no way of moving - everything had to be brought in by plane -
- 1943 - 1st Jan., Col. Gen.. Many people around Hitler told him that he had

held and reluctantly - perhaps because of von Kluge's persistence - Hitler had made him a Col. General.

=====

Went first to see Guderian - had been in Karlsbad suffering from stomach ailment during his convalescence, Russians broke through 4th Army.

Goering had complained that Heinrici had not destroyed everything as he was ordered to. Heinrici had flatly forbidden it (scorched earth). He had forbidden that Cathedral in Smolensk be destroyed. Chiefly for his own troops too - "if I had set it in flames how would we have gotten through it."

He had been in Karlsbad from 1944 - let him sit there.

Then came July 20th, ^{Generals had} Lots of Germans disappeared, so he was called back. Put in charge of 1st Panzer Army in the Carpathians and attached was 1st Hungarian Army and all called Heeresgruppe Heinrici. Trouble with Hungarians who wanted to bunk. Miklos said: "I get my orders from Budapest, etc..." Heinrici gave him his last three bottles of cognac. Following day Hungarian General Miklos and his staff defected to the Russians on 15 October 1944. Then his car broke down: 35 miles from his HQ.

He was ordered to return to Berlin. Saw Guderian: What's it all about? Remember I've been in Hungary. Before I go over I need a briefing."

Guderian told him of the situation. Allies on West; Russians on East. Then he told him that Himmler had taken over Army Group Vistula (Heeresgruppe Weichsel). He was hopeless, things were "in an unbelievable mess". Guderian flew into such a temper as he talked about Himmler that Heinrici ~~at~~ thought "he was going to drop dead from a heart attack".

Guderian told him of the ceaseless trips back and forth between Zossen and the bunker. Guderian said that he now was

H-Ob.G. 22 March talked with Guderian. flew in to Schörner HQ then to Berlin. His whole life staff had asked him "if he really wanted to the job". They knew he was not in good favor with H. and that he really resented K & J tactics.

"I am a soldier. I must do what I am told just as Pvt. Meyer or Pvt. Schmidt. Also never interfere with fate."

"I have always experienced in my life ^{that} when I was ordered to go somewhere - against my inner reluctance and feelings - it usually turned out to my good in the end."

He always carried with him the parole book of the protestant church and this included a special text for each day. ^{see}

The day he took over 4th Army in Russia, he read text that evening and read Joshua "Do not be afraid for I am with you".
(...you shall be led by me")

"My staff looked at me as though I was a lamb being led to the slaughter."

He drove from Bautzen in Saxony to Berlin. On his way to Zossen he was astonished that even ⁱⁿ the villagers there were air raid alarms.

It was very depressing he hadn't experienced this before. With him was his aide von Bila. They were both depressed. At Zossen called "Maybach", he found Guderian. There had been an air raid shortly before and there was damage. Just saw Krebs. Had known him since war's beginning when he had been on von Kluge's staff. Krebs was exceptionally intelligent, had been military attaché in Moscoow before the war.

After Ribbentrop signed treaty with Russians. Stalin had embraced Krebs: "We shall always be friends".

Every morning when he shaved ^{Krebs} he would learn a few more words of Russians to improve vocabulary.

During air raid Krebs didn't go down to shelter, stayed at desk, was hit by a splinter which had severed the tempor^{alis} vein in right temple. "He received me wearing a large white turban of bandages."

Krebs was an optimist and "always saw things from the sunny side to such an extent that he could change black into white". He was a good, brave soldier, but "he always minimized the damage for Hitler's sake".

He always "refused to believe the truth". Once one of his officers asked to be relieved "because I cannot work with him. Each time I tell him something about losses, he says I exaggerate".

"Even though this was a great drawback in Krebs' character he was a brave man and he knew exactly what was going on but he minimized. He did this to the end and shot himself when Russians arrived - playing the role right to the end. He was an actor."

He said "hello" to ^{happened} (H. Lag.)

Then: "What's ^{up} your head". K: "Oh, nothing." H. said: "It didn't upset Krebs at all."

Saw Guderian - they were good friends, having worked and known each other for years. Rooms were very simple, barrack-like, "Guderian didn't even have an easy chair".

G: "I'll tell you one thing: I was the one who got you up here. H. really wanted somebody else, but I told H. ^{iller} that you were the man we needed.

I drove up to Himmlers HQ to tell him he would be relieved, I told him it would be better."

In the evening he got a call from his former.

5 - *Told him:*

"I gather that Himmler was very happy to leave - he didn't want to be the one to be in charge when Germany collapses. He wanted just a simple general to be the goat - what can I do?"

With G. he said: "I have no idea what's going on. I've been in the wilds of Hungary."

The map ~~of~~ that Guderian showed didn't give much of a picture. But when he saw the names of divisions and the troops he was to command "he was shocked".

Most regiments have numbers but he discovered that they had weird names such as "Döberitz, Kurmark, Berlin," and so on.

"Gruppe Kassen", "Gruppe Klossek". That showed that they weren't regular troops; he got the impression that these were a hodgepodge of splinter troops just thrown together. "I soon discovered the whole truth".

Then Heinrich said: "Could you explain the situation here?" G. really got into the swing "and poured his heart out".

He began walking up and down the room.

"The way the war is being run is unbelievable. The Ardennes battle was a complete error. I repeatedly begged H. on my knees to get our troops out of the Ardennes and put them on the East front because I knew the Russians would attack any day. And because our Panzer troops were tied down on the West the whole Russian-Polish front collapsed. When finally we got them back from the West, they were sent to the Plattensee in Hungary and there launched a perfectly useless attack - with no reason or purpose."

(Sepp Dietrich had been in charge of the Panzer attack; they got stuck in the mud and Hitler ordered that their ribbons be removed).

Also in the Kurland there are 18 divisions for strictly nothing. They are needed here. It is impossible to work. ~~XX~~ Twice a day I have to drive from here to Hitler's bunker - it's impossible. Then you get held up for hours there. They spent hours discussing nothing. I can't get any work done anymore. ~~XX~~ I'm either on the road or listening to drivel in the bunker."

Heinrich saw that G. had turned "but red". He was sure he would drop dead because he had a heart condition. Looked at watch.

G: "Oh God, I have to go back to the bunker by three. We're going to plan an attack to wipe out Russian bridgehead south of Küstrin. Our plans have spotted ~~fix~~ no less than 800 artillery positions - imagine 800! We have neither the artillery nor the ammo to destroy them. It's not sure that each Position is fully manned with guns, but we've photographed the positions.

Once they begin we are dead. Because of this Hitler had decided that we should attack from Frankfurt with five Panzer Grenadier Divisions,

(Pz.Gren.Div. had more infantry and less Panzer than Panzer Divisions) on east side of the Oder toward Küstrin and encircle the whole lot.

H: "Is this bridgehead in Frankfurt large enough to contain five divisions? It looks tiny to me on the map."

G: "They'll just have to roll over the bridge one after the other which means a column of about 15 miles".

H: " Well where are the Russians?"

G: " They are on the hill around the bridgehead.

H: " Well, aren't they going to pulverize our troops with their artillery? and afterwards hit ~~xxxx~~ them with planes?

G: " Hitler sent K(rebs?) to see if it was possible. K. said : 'Oh yes, it is' ". H. looked at the map and saw that sector was jammed with Russian troops. He said: "Look if they all pour in between Küstrin and Frankfurt and the panzers are jammed with their backs to the Oder it will be a most peculiar way to attack. It will be a disaster.

G: " That's what I told H. He replied that just because it is so peculiar H. R's won't expect it and therefore it will succeed. I have to go. I just have to go. Why don't you come with me? You can report to Hitler right now.

H: "Look, If I'm supposed to launch this crazy attack the day after tomorrow I better get down there and see how it can be done best. This is an enormous difficult enterprise - the Russians are looking right down our throats. The Führer can wait a few days before he ~~sees~~ sees me.

G: "Well, all right, I'll tell H. you have arrived and H. ~~tk~~ on him after the attack."

He went to the canteen with ~~xxxxxx~~ von Bila. He hadn't eaten..... (?)

He knew the attack was insane and couldn't be carried out. At this point the Americans and British were at the Rhine. On the Oder the waters were in flood in some parts 3 miles wide - from Bad Freienwalde to Stettin was flooded upwards of two miles. Küstrin was isolated by the waters. On west side of the Oder the banks were 30 - 50 meters higher than ^{the} Oder itself which meant that if you stood on the banks you could see ~~xx~~ almost 10 miles ahead. Therefore the S. ^{oviet} ~~wxxx~~ pos. were strong because of the elevation and the floods. Because of all this there was a chance of holding at least for the time being. He was thinking of this crazy attack as he set out for his HQ at Birkenheim. He knew also H. probably orders had already been given. Also "it was not very clear in his mind just how S. intended to win the war". But he had and got to do it. He couldn't bother about the overall situation. Birkenheim was in the middle of the woods - about 12 miles from Zossen. Himmler had built this entire barrack as his own personal refuge. It was meant for a few hundred people. In the middle there was a large ornate house with wooden pillars in front and here was Himmler's apartment, study, bedrooms and dining rooms. Around were small barracks.

"I arrived at this beautiful Germanic building with its stupid wooden pillars.

As he entered through the pillars and foyer there wasn't a soul to be seen except an SS corporal. He and his aide sat down on a bench. Heinrich:

"Is anybody around? Am I expected?"

The corporal led him to Himmler's chief of staff, SS-Obergruppenführer Lammerding. He was very polite. "Will you wait a moment until I tell Himmler."

He went out and H. sat on the bench for 15 minutes, ~~for 15 minutes~~. He said to v. Bila: "Go tell them I want to see Himmler immediately. I have no intention of sitting in this ante room any longer."

Bila: The Reichsführer presents his apologies but he is engaged in a most important discussion right now". This discussion came to an end fast and I was shown into Himmler's study.

It was with the greatest disgust that he had driven to see Himmler. Nobody knew much about Himmler or his methods. "We had heard enough about his methods with the jews." A cousin of Heinrich's had married a jew, had fought in WWI, received the iron cross. He was fighting in Russia and suddenly he had received a desperate letter from the cousin saying that her husband had been taken away by SS. Heinrich had driven through a snowstorm to see an SS Obergruppenführer von Gottberg in charge of partisan destruction and he couldn't find him and when he drove back a second time it was too late. Now he remembered this. He had always had a great aversion to Himmler and he felt physically ill when he faced him. He saw a pale, sagging face and unhealthy skin, of a sort of spongy quality. He was standing at his desk and he came forward to Heinrich.

Himmler: "It is a terribly difficult decision for me to make to leave the Herresgruppe Weichsel. I'm not in very good health and I have so many posts and jobs to do."

He said it off-handedly.

Himmler: "Now I'm going to tell you all that has happened. I've asked for all the maps and they're here."

He asked for a steno to take down what he said. A uniformed SSman came in and then Himmler had dragged a huge stack of maps. Then Col. Eismann (the only Wehrmacht man on Himmler's staff) came in. Also Kinzel who had been on Himmler's staff before because Eismann had been overworked (Lammerding, Himmler's Chief of Staff, "had no idea how to be a CofS or even what one did".)

"We all sat around and Himmler started off with Adam and Eve". Heinrich listened to this patiently and Himmler "got lost in details so that nothing made any sense".

So Kinzel got up and asked to be excused, "he had much to do". A few minutes later Eismann also had "an important job". Finally the steno put down his pencil.

Heinrich was absolutely bored. He doesn't remember exactly at what part of the

conversation the phone rang, but it was General Busse of the 9th Army.

Himmler took the receiver, startled. He said: "You take this call".

Heinrici: "This is Heinrici, who is this?"

Phone: "General Busse".

It was Heinrici's first contact with Busse.

B: "Well, ~~what~~ I have seen for a long time has happened, the 25 Panzer Division defending the area between the two Russian bridgeheads around Küstrin have had to be pulled out and replaced by 20th Panzer because it was needed for this insane planned attack. The 20th is not in good shape, tired out. Russians spotted it and they have attacked and broken through. Communication with them have been cut off.

Heinrici turned to Himmler: "Busse reports the 20th Panzer has been cut off".

Himmler replied: "Well, it's all yours. You are the Commander of the Heeres-gruppe Weichsel.

Heinrici: Look, I don't know a damn thing about the group. I don't know who's where or what soldiers I even have."

Himmler just looked at him helplessly.

Heinrici to Busse: "Look, I've just arrived here. I know nothing yet. What do you think should be done?"

Busse: "We must launch a counter attack to free the 20th - now."

Heinrici: "Give the necessary orders. I'll come out immediately".

There was absolutely nothing else he could do, he said to Himmler: "How do you consider situation?"

The question was visibly disagreeable to Himmler. He led Heinrici to a sofa and they both sat down.

Himmler: "I have taken the necessary steps to negotiate with the West. "

Heinrici was speechless. It was "the greatest surprise". Through a "neutral country", said Himmler, "I have made contacts. It ~~is~~ is a great secret, you understand."

An SS officer entered: "The staff is ready to say goodbye to you".

Himmler got up fast, visibly relieved. They went over to the dining room together where his staff had gathered "very smart, impeccably dressed" and ~~then~~ then they all sat down and ate.

Eismann said: "It's the first time Himmler has ever eaten with the staff - except for this Lammerding".

The meal was "very simple, not like Goering". The meal was simply sliced sausage and bread and butter. Throughout the meal there was a kind of tortured conversation between Heinrici and Himmler (it was a lousy meal) as soon as Himmler finished, he got up and left. He immediately disappeared into his private

apartment.

Heinrici then sat down with Eismann and Kinzel and said: "For God's sake brief me. I don't know a thing yet."

Next morning the barracks was completely deserted. His batman Balzer came in: "Where do we get breakfast around here?"

Balzer: "Nowhere, the SS has taken everything ~~and~~ - knives, forks, cups, everything."

Heinrici was so angry that he could hardly speak. Got former staff of Army group F. After this the whole SS atmosphere disappeared with the exception of the party man.

Got cup of coffee from field kitchen in a tin cup.

22 of March

On 24th to Busse who was attacking. It didn't succeed. He went to the Reichskanzlei to tell Hitler that the attack had been unsuccessful.

They were not in the bunker yet. Big room, ante room where maps were laid out by staff officers. Chancellory was damaged. Gathered in ante room before conference. Coffee, sandwiches. Jodl, Keitel, Guderian, about 30 people. Keitel greeted him as an old friend. He talked with Jodl.

Keitel looked quite depressed. He got the impression that Keitel knew very well what he was up against but wouldn't make any comment to Heinrici. Very soon they were all asked to go into the conference room - a very large room. It was about 40 square meters. The curtains were drawn. Lights turned on a on Hitler's desk a lamp with a green shade was turned on. A few seconds later a door opened and Hitler arrived.

Heinrici was "deeply startled, even shocked" at what he saw. Hitler was a "ruin". He was "bent". He "didn't" walk, he shuffled almost dragging one foot after the other. He was very pale.

Heinrici went toward him. Hitler came forward Heinrici, gave the Hitler salute and the adjutant said: "This is Col.^u en. Heinrici. You ~~decorated~~ decorated him with the swords and palms on March 3 and here is the order."

He received these decorations because he had managed to hold Germany's last appropriated coal fields in Czechoslovakia.

Hitler: "This is for excellent leadership".

After this was over, Hitler dragged himself behind the desk and collapsed on a chair which somebody pushed under him.

An adjutant then gave him a ~~apxi~~ pair of green glasses.

Heinrici was motioned to stand on Hitler left because his right ear had been damaged in the 20th July plot.

Heinrici: "Mein Führer, Busse launched his attack this morning. But it was unsuccessful. He will attack again this afternoon. Connections with the Panzer Army at Küstrin must be established at all costs".

Heinrici told him that a regiment of the Vlassov army was creating problems. Some of them were defecting back to the Russians. ~~He didn't~~ ^H didn't like having them in the line and he requested that they be pulled out and sent elsewhere say to the south. He said: "he had pulled them out of the front line". Hitler promptly gave an order that they be disarmed."

Conference was short. Heinrici drove back to Birkenheim. But first he drove through Berlin to see what had really happened to the city.

It reminded of 1943 when he went to Münster in Westphalia. His driver collected him in Dortmund. They drove to Münster during night and then the driver said: "I don't know where I am anymore". There were no streets, no landmarks left in Dortmund. It was unrecognizable - so it was now for Heinrici in Berlin. He couldn't recognize it any ~~more~~ ^{more}. It was just "a huge smouldering pile of ruins".

His driver's name was Christiansen.

Got back to Birkenheim. There he learned ~~that~~ ^{that} second attack of Busse had been unsuccessful.

Then Guderian of OKH called: "There must be another attack", he told the OB.

OB: This is crazy. I would suggest that the Panzer unit break out itself. Guderian's argument was, the only roads that passed through the flooded area's were those leading out of Küstrin. "If we give up these the Russians will pour across."

(The Russians were actually building bridges some of ~~thk~~ them 3 km's long to cross the flooded area. These bridges were extremely difficult to destroy because they were so far away. Only heavy artillery could hit them and then only with luck. There was little ammo for this sort of shelling. These were not pontoon bridges but causeways on pylons. "Russians were incredibly clever in this sort of engineering.")

27. March 3rd attack)

4 div., Pz. Müncheberg, Führerbegleit div. (elite household div.) and 2 panzer grenadier divisions.

Panzers actually reached Küstrin but ~~following~~ was simply massacred by R. artillery fire. "that was the end of it", panzers pulled back. "Incredible losses for nothing".

Then the question was asked "what do we do now".

OB said to Heinrici: "Let the div. break out of Küstrin."

H. had declared Küstrin a "fortified place". G. went along with it.

(Before the attack even started Himmler had sent in an SS man named Reinefarth to hold the place. He's now a Bürgermeister in Schleswig-Holstein and was a deputy.

After receiving the orders to hold March 30 Reinefahrt broke out and against orders to hold. 8,000 men were in Küstrin only 1,000 came out. B. and Heinrici ordered his arrest and he was courtmartialled. Since he was a ~~protege~~ ~~protege~~ of Himmler the trial never took place).

"But the attack had achieved some success: the Russians had been denied the high ground.

Hitler was mad at the disaster and lack of success of the attack.

(Busse ac. of Hitler and Guderian firing).

That evening OB called OKW with the latest reports. To his surprise the phone was answered by Krebs. OB said "I meant to talk to Guderian". Krebs said:

"Guderian is sick and I didn't know what exactly had happened."

Guderian didn't even say goodbye. But if he had Heinrici had planned to tell him off because of the loss of 8,000 men at Küstrin.

As a result the "crazy" attack was cancelled.

31st March he got orders that Weichsel was to (sentence not completed)

24/4 von Trotha (mentioned above)

The OKH proposed von Trotha who was Chief of Operations section, as H.'s Chief of Staff. H. already knew about von Trotha since he already had had him as ~~Staff~~ Chief of Staff in 1st Panzer Army in Czechoslovakia. Heinrici did not agree at first with this proposition. He said to Kinzel in Eismann's presence: " Maybe von Trotha is quite intelligent and clean but ~~his~~ his feet are in the air. I know him".

Nevertheless von Trotha was named Chief of Staff to me this was disagreeable. Trotha and myself knew each other well and we both knew that we were mostly of different opinion. Von Trotha was an intelligent, respectable officer but he never had his feet on the ground - on the ground of realizing of fact. He mostly had grandiose and fantastic projects that never took into account the real facts. For any kind of disagreeable but truthful news he always had an optimistic explanation. He always tried to embellish the facts.

Eismann (I) asked to be relieved. G.H. wouldn't let me go. He demanded that I remain in my post in spite of the difficulties and he assured me of his full confidence and faith. But the situation that developed out of this was that the OB worked very closely with the Ia thus isolating the Chief of Staff von Trotha. As a human being I had a certain respect for von Trotha, certain tensions developed. It was impossible to accept von Trotha ~~over~~ over-enthusiasm and too flashy optimism. The suspicions are not unfounded that v. Trotha was sent to fight against dark defeatism of Army Groups Vistula. It was clearly visible that v.^KTrotha had received orders from Krebs to influence the command.

H. For somebody at the front trying to fight for these types was too much. Steiner had immediately voiced his disapproval of the attack from the..... (pushing through to Spandau)

S: "but that's crawling the wall.

H.: Well yes, but that's for your Führer.

Heinrici immediately went to spot to see Steiner.

OKW kept sending out staff officers who had no staffs to take stock of the situation.

H. Asked E. and von Trotha to a discussion of situation 25/4 in enemy.

Result was simple enough: if the Army Group Vistula follows these orders the same thing that happened to 9th will have to it in a few days. It is impossible to defend the Oder or liberate Berlin.

Gen. Heinrici then asked first von Trotha and then me for our opinion. von Tr. started off with a long ~~preamble~~ preamble. After a long time "over a few simple facts" his judgement of the situation reached its peak when he said: "The Army Group has to do everything to carry out the orders", my answer was "rather short".

I agree with OBH in every point. Out of this comes the only solution that we have to act against the orders of the OKW to save the lives of our troops. My opinion was to retreat immediately toward the west and take up positions along the Meklenburg lakes. In these positions they would have to hold out until the final capitulation took place. "As soon as I said "general capitulation" v. K. Trotha very excitedly interrupted me "there will never be any question of capitulation". OBH didn't say anything, "just looked at me". Eismann: Of course all this will end with capitulation.

Von Trotha very sharply took a position against moving back. When OBH asked him very sharply: "What's your solution?" von Tr. replied: to try the impossible - follow the orders.

During the whole speech he evoked about the honor of a Senior Officer.

OBH: Now the time is over for beautiful words and emotions. The time has come for bloody seriousness. I cannot carry any longer the responsibility of following those senseless and suicide orders. Not one more German soldier should be sacrificed in such a senseless manner. This responsibility I have to carry before my soldiers, the German people and a higher one than Hitler - God.

Even though von Tr. protested the OBH he agreed to the overall plan for retreat.

Eismann wanted to retreat faster than OBH. But OBH said No.: We hold on Wotan 48 hours to give Steiner a chance to attack. Then 2 days on the next line. If we don't, we'll be retreating west, steiner will be attacking south and he can be cut off.

WOTAN LINE

Randow Bruch

Angermünde

Eberswalde

Müncheberg

Schwielochsee

(Wotan - God of Thunder (Germanic equivalent to Jupiter))

3rd Line

given up on April 27

Uckerfluss

Grimnitzsee

Werbellinsee

Bernau

Outer defense line of Berlin

4th Line

Peene Fluss near Anklam

Treptow

Neubrandenburg

Neu-Strelitz

Fürstenberg (east of Havel river near Zehdenick)

On 27.4. after R. broke through 3rd line he asked OKW that Steiner's attack be cancelled and that 25th Pz.Gren.Div. and the 7. Pz.Div (with no panzers left) be moved up to the 4th line.

27.Apr. at 10 past 5

Eismann reported to OKW that at 1 o'clock in afternoon situation was as follows

Russian breakthrough between two lakes (Ueckersee) reached Boitzenburg.

He said: OBH asks cancellation of S's attack and that 25th Pz. and 7th Pz.Div. be moved back up Boitzenburg to stop the breakthrough, that an immediate decision was necessary otherwise the OB had to make his own decision.

Keitel wrote later: "To cancel S's attack in which Hitler had placed all his hopes and faith was terribly difficult for me".

"Jodl and I agreed H. the situation at Heinrich's ^{army} ~~xxx~~ group was such that the enemy would reach his rear positions within two days. Therefore we had to cancel S's attack."

At 5.30 von Trotha had gone to see OKW and called through that 25th Pz. and 7th Pz. were freed and could be brought into area of Templin.

Keitel (PG361) "~~Fake~~ ~~xxxx~~ "False" setup Heinrich - both Pzs divisions were pulled out.

(Jodl says "I have been silent for 5 years. I was an obedient soldier. I consider it horrible to follow orders") ("During ~~xxxx~~ those 5 years I was completely silent even though the nonsense I was ordered to carry out seemed impossible. Since 1942 I knew we couldn't win the war) (It was impossible for Hitler

to capitulate. What did they expect him to do? Nobody would even ~~x~~ consider negotiating with him. There were only two issues left - to fight to the last, or commit suicide. Hitler all his life had been a fighter. So he chose the first solution. Was it heroism or insanity?

To spare his people from further misery couldn't he have killed himself earlier? Hitler did indeed consider this ~~thing~~ during the last days of his life. On April 22nd Hitler told me that ~~he~~ would stay in Berlin to the end and he added "I ~~am~~ should have taken this most important decision of my life to commit suicide in November 1944.

We, his military advisers, should have told him earlier, what a naive thought! Earlier than anyone in the world Hitler knew the war was lost. But can you declare lost a Reich and ~~ax~~ people - before they are really lost?

A man like Hitler could not do it. He should have been killed in the fighting instead of choosing the flight into death of suicide, people say....

He would have done it if it had been physically possible for him. Therefore he ~~d~~ did not chose the easier death, but the surer one.

He has acted as all the heroes throughout history have acted - and alway will act.

He let himself be buried in the ruins of his Reich and his hopes. Let him be judged by those who want to - I can't!)"

Manteuffel and Heinrici confirm that they ~~were~~ searched for weapons as they went into bunker.

H: All ~~one~~ could do was to accept the fact that you had to fight to the last.

15/4. Speer to H.

S: "If you want cancel orders which Hitler gives- the only way you can do it is to use a pistol.

H. Well, I was ~~k~~ not born to a murder.

S: It-s impossible anyway gut I could do it ~~if~~ I thought it would help the German people. But I can't, H. has always believed in me. It would be indecent.

When he left Kinzel said: Minister Speer must never step into this HQ again. If it's known he talked to us like that - we shall all be shot."

Speer flew into Berlin in this Fieseler Storch even when the city was surrounded to say goodbye to Hitler.

S: Why destroy everything even though Germany is ~~defeated~~ - the German people

must survive.

I come to see you so you can help me ~~stop~~ this scorched earth policy.

The people in charge are the Gauleiter.

The question is what will happen in Berlin. Luckily I have Reymann with me.

For Heinrici

1. make-up of OBW April '45
2. Russ. Orders of Battle
3. Koniev.

~~Eismann~~ 185 pg.

9th Army asked the OB at beginning of April that Frankfurt be no longer considered fortified place, that they be allowed to withdraw. Frankfurt at this time was defended by two inf.div. with quite a lot of artillery. According to Führer orders no forces were allowed to withdraw from a fortified place.

~~XXXXXXXX~~ Busse's argument was and OB agreed H front here. NS of Frankfurt was weak and ^{if} it was easy for Russians to break through and encircle Frankfurt. If half of the forces were pulled out and used N & S to reinforce the line the danger would be ~~sends~~ considerably less. Therefore OB asked H permission to follow this plan. As expected Hitler refused.

After Hitler's refusal, OB got an order to report to Berlin on 5/4. "to talk about the defense the Army Groups Vistula is preparing".

OB went with Eismann to see Hitler. Eismann said: "It was clear that Heinrici was preparing an allout attack against his advisors."

Heinrici: "I have decided to do something about this."

There was "a certain tension in the air before they went".

They arrived at Wilhelmstrasse shortly after two in the afternoon (meeting was planned for 3)

There was nothing left of the ~~m~~ former glamor or glitter. They crossed the devastated garden of the chancellery which was covered with glass and rubble.

OB: It was an incredible mess of craters, lumps of concrete, uprooted trees and in the back of the Reichkanzlei the windows were great black holes without glass.

"While they looked around the garden with Eismann, I thought that the man who three years ago had Europe under his command from the Volga to the Atlantic Wall was now sitting holed up in a foxhole under the earth who couldn't dare to get his head above the ground anymore.

I wouldn't have at the time but Hitler was already sitting in this grave".

They then entered the bunker went down the stairs where their ciats were taken by two SS men. Then they were very "gently and politely searched - the SS men were full of apologies". They also looked through Eismann's briefcase, "how could anyone try it again". said Eismann to OB later, "unless we strangled 2 30 of them with our hands".

Then "we went down another flight.of ~~22~~ stairs to the underworld, where we sat down in a very comfortable, well-furnished room. We were the first and then a very elegantly dressed aide asked them if they would have refreshments. OB ordered coffee and sandwiches because the drive from Birkenheim had been a long one. Slowly people arrived, among them Keitel, Himmler, Doenitz, Bormann, Burgdorf. Eismann felt: "I was really proud to be with only soldier among all these count asses".

OB was particularly cold and distant when Himmler appeared. Eismann remembered that OB had said to Hinzl and himself: "This man is never going to get foot in my HQ again. If he announces a visit tell me quickly so that I can "leave". He makes me vomit."

Then Keitel, Krebs and Doenitz began talking to Heinrici, the "promised to support my requests".

Heinrici felt a little better. "I didn't know them very well, I had only taken over and I needed support for my views.

Then Bormann said to Eismann: "How do you consider the Berlin situation?"

Eismann replied: "It is worrying - that's why we're here."

Bormann patted him on the shoulder. "We'll help you here - don't worry. You'll get what you want."

Eismann was sturck by Jodl when he arrived, by his "ice-cold composure".

Then it was announced that the "Führer was coming".

Keitel then decided who would participate inthe discusion - "the room was only about 5 square meters. Krebs, Himmler, Doenitz, Bormann, Keitel, Jodl, Koller and Eismann and OB.

The immediately entered the Lage room - (situation). The remainder stayed in the ante room. Discussion still went on outside. Eismann thought "it was very peculiar" that ~~this~~^{ey} would talk so loudly when the head of state was holding a conference."

Then Burgdorf: "The Führer arrives". Hitler entered. "He came in bent, dragging his feet, he shook everybody's hand but without as saying a word.

Last time OB had seen him was in March. He noticed that he wasn't wearing green glasses this time. Hitler "hand was soft and flabby". OB noticed that "I could hardly feel it; it was flabby and spongy".

He let himself sink into a chair before the map table without saying a word. "He ~~ex~~ looked crumpled".

Besides Hitler's arm chair was a simple wooden bench. On this bench - Himmler, Doenitz and Keitel sat down.

(see sketch)

Keitel said: General Heinrici is here with his Ia.

Krebs: I propose that we start the discussion right away - so that OB can get back to his ~~Heere~~ Heeresgrupp as soon as possible.

Hitler simply nodded - made a gesture to OB to begin.

Ob explained the situation as Eismann puts it: briefly and dryly".

"The enemy is preparing an attack of unusual force. At this moment is preparing all in the areas south of Frankfurt, south of Schwedt.

Besides infantry armies, the Russians have at least two Panzer armies, three panzer corps (one mechanical corps (~~with~~ infantry with panzers) and 1 to 2 car corps (panzer). Their strength can be estimated at 2,000 armored vehicles also the enemy AF is very strong.

The enemy attack will mainly be against the 9th army and the south flank of the 3rd Pz. Army.

(+ 2 Pz. corps, 1 inf.corps, 1 ~~xt~~car corps and all panzer))

~~Since~~ Since our forces are weak in this sector I have in the area between Küstrin and Wriezen the 5th Infantry (Hunter) Div. and the 9th Para Div.

Also I have put the 1st Navy Div. south of Schwedt.

(as Busse had put the Pz.Gren.Div. Müncheberg - Mummert also in this are, around Küstrin and as OB had reinforced with other units, the area between Frankfurt And Schwedt ~~is~~ was very strong.)

But because of these ~~ex~~ moves the middle and south of the 3rd pz.army ~~now~~ now lacks forces. In certain parts of these areas the front line is held by Volkssturm, Hungarian SS units and Vlassov troops.

As soon as the promised reserves from Wehrkreis II (Defense area II - Northern area from Pomerania, Stettin, Mecklenburg) arrive, they shall be used in....

The real fighting value of these men in the middle and north of the 3rd Pz. Army is very low - they have no artillery ~~at~~ whatsoever.

("The man who ran the gas manufacturing firm Politz had been completely bombed out but he continued to make 100 lts. a day. He had put pipes into the woods - even

though the Russians were on the far side looking at him. So I gave him the iron cross").

"The flak guns which have ~~insufficient~~ ammo anyway cannot replace the missing artillery. "

"This state of weakness of the 3rd Panzer Army can only be accepted so long as the Oder remains flooded.

(But this was April and the floods were receding. We had been thinking of prolonging the floods by opening the dams at Ottmachau near Neisse and Glatz. It commands the whole flow of the Oder. OB objected because "whose villages will disappear". He did approve of letting water out now and then to keep up the flood.

"Also since last night we have noted that thousands of Russian vehicles (they had seen columns of up to 5,000 vehicles moving from Danzig area) are moving towards the Oder. We don't know where they will be used, but they are coming - probably they carry troops.

Also an air force army is moving their equipment - even their airports - towards Naugard.

On the basis of all this we must count on attack against the 3rd Pz. Army. "

After this Hitler and Krebs said: "The 3rd ^{Pz} Army will receive artillery shortly" (some did arrive).

This 2nd point was that "the flood of the Oder would hold up the Russian attack"

Krebs said: "Well, you don't know yet where they are going, whether the Russians are concentrating the forces on the upper Oder, it might be somewhere else. I believe they will probably attack further south - probably against Schörner.

OB said nothing.

Ob then said: "The 3rd Pz. Army is in no state to fight. The 9th Army is considerably better - especially since they have been reinforced. A further improvement of the 9th Army will be through the inclusion of the Müncheberg Division which should not be used as a reserve division.

OB continued: I do not have confidence in the divisions stationed around Wriezen (where finally the attack came!). Also the 9th Para division stationed at Küstrin worries me a little. They are excellent people but their officers and non-coms are very often former administration officers. They are not accustomed to leading men as fighting units (gasps had been filled in division's heavy casualties with everyone).

Goering had entered as OB was speaking. Suddenly he jumped up and screamed:

"The paratroopers are the best fighting troops in existence. I do not want to hear any more such degrading remarks.!"

So OB: I'm not saying anything against your troops but my experience has taught ~~that we~~ me that such young untrained units receive terrible shocks as soon as they are exposed to artillery bombardment. Then, they are not good any more.

(Goering had taken OB's remarks as personal insult because paras were attached to A.G.. Next day Goering rang Eismann and said: Its inconceivable that Heinrici would talk about my paras like that. They are the Cassino troops and I have no intention of giving him my 2nd Para Division that I still have. I'm giving it to Schörner - the real soldier, ~~la~~ true soldier.

On 17th of April he visited Weidling and he was told: "General Breuer came to see me. He collapsed ~~in~~ in a chair, crying: "My paratroopers are running away and I can't do anything to hold ~~them~~ them back. I'm completely impotent in this situation.")

OB continued: The sector ~~on~~ either side of Frankfurt is also unsatisfactory. The front is too weak.

After he had said ~~this~~ a big discussion began. Finally Hitler said: "I refuse to accept this."

As Eismann remembered it: "Up to this point Hitler had remained unmoved but the moment OB began talking about Frankfurt he became intense - it was then that Hitler became awake.

"Hitler asked in a very faint voice a few questions about ammo of the divisions in Frankfurt and their strength. I answered Hitler's questions; on the whole he seemed to agree with my answers. Hitler said to Krebs: "OB's judgements of the situation in Frankfurt seems to be correct. Make the necessary orders and show them to me this day."

After Hitler said this to Krebs OB looked at me over Hitler's head as much as to say - "well, we've won!"

At this something ~~xx~~ very unexpected happened. Hitler suddenly sat bolt upright in his chair with a sudden jerk. Words came from him like an erupting volcano. He began to yell against his counsellors and generals who he accused "of refusing to understand me". Hitler said: "History has taught us how important it is to defend a fortification. My order to defend a fortified place to last man is right. That's why Frankfurt should remain a fortified place."

As suddenly as this outbreak had started it stopped. Hitler couldn't sit quiet anymore. he began trembling all over. A few pencils that he was holding in his hand began clattering against the armrest of his chair. The whole scene was

unreal. It was unconceivable to me that such a human ruin should decide over so many human lives.

Eismann remembers that OB "did not give up".

In a quiet voice he once more underlined the importance of taking the troops out of Frankfurt. Doenitz, Himmler and Goering supported OB, (but OB only remembers Doenitz supporting him).

Hitler only made tired gestures with his hands and asked a few more questions about Frankfurt - questions that had been answered already. All of a sudden Hitler took a very vivid interest in the commander of Frankfurt.

OB said: The commander is a very reliable and experienced officer - Col. Bieler - who had ~~xx~~ volunteered to take over Frankfurt even though he was wounded and his wounds hadn't healed yet.

Hitler said: Is he a Gneisenau (The name of the Col. (or General) who during the war against Napoleon in 1807 had defended Kolberg so bravely that the French couldn't take it).

Eismann remembered "that even this astonishing question didn't upset Heinrich".

OB very coldly replied "if Bieler is a Gneisenau or not, He'll prove during the attack".

(He was - OB says)

Hitler requested that "Bieler come and see me next day", so that Hitler could judge him. Then said Hitler "I shall decide what is to be done about Frankfurt. (Bieler wore glasses and OB felt that they would aid his cause - SS didn't like glasses, it ~~xxxx~~ wasn't aryan).

This all meant to OB that first round in battle in Frankfurt was lost.

OB continued: The 9th Army is in good shape except for some ~~xxx~~ weaknesses among the infantry, but they are in good, well built positions. However, the night before 9th Army received orders to give four of their best divisions to Schörner and this is^a very serious drawback.

(Schörner had picked the divisions and asked OKW to requisition them - 10 SS Pz. 25 Pz., SS-Führer Guard Div., and SS-Führer Grenadier Div. - all very well equipped and in excellent condition. Schörner was great protégé of Hitler).

Hitler said: To me too the fact that I had to give these divisions to Schörner. But the main Russian attack is directed against the Army Group Weichsel but against Schörner with the aim of taking Prague already two Russian Pz. Armies are getting ready in Schörner sectors.

As OB remembers it "these killed me completely but I had no arguments against it because I didn't know what the situation was opposite Schörner's group. I remember how I looked at Krebs - in astonishment and disbelief. I thought to myself: how could anyone think the way Hitler does.

Krebs said: The possibility the Führer has just mentioned cannot be discarded. (Stalin had said that Bismarck had often said: "Whoever has Prague, has Europe". It was Zhukov who said "we must take Berlin". Schörner (?) he learned later had heard about this conflict).

OB continued: there are ~~xxx~~ two more things that have been weighing on my mind. Will the infantry resist the heavy shelling that will precede the attack - there are 800 artillery positions alone around Küstrin? I have ordered that a 2nd HKL be built behind the first to which the troops will proceed during the night before the attack. Then they will use their ammo on the first HKL - the empty ones. This 2nd HKL will be completed within a few days. The most important thing for us of course is to find out the exact time of the attack - we don't know this yet. We shall do everything to try and find out.

(Russians had learned of OB's tricks and always began with preliminary attacks to see where front line was. OB knew this too - so he they would always have 48 hours before main attack! Like von Salmuth I'd become "a very sly old fox".)

then OB came to 2nd point: "Since you have taken away these divisions for Schörner practically all my troops are on front - I have no reserves. During an attack we must consider that a division loses a battalion a day, that's a full full division every seven days. In fact a division can only hold out 5 days. because the two battalions left could not hold a sector - they must retreat (12,000 men).

After he said this there was a very embarrassing silence. Goering jumped up "Mein Führer," he said with his hands on the table, "I put 100,000 men at your disposal". Then Himmler got up, "Mein Führer," he said, "The SS is putting 25,000 men at your disposal". Finally Doenitz said "Mein Führer, I shall provide 12,500 men".

OB said "What I need are divisions - not people who have never seen a front line. These are hords of people but they are not troops." ~~Somebody~~ somebody said: "You can pick the best among those".

A long discussion began about how and where to use these people. Finally Hitler ordered that these men should be used "8 to 10 km behind the HKL to stop deep Russian breakthroughs". Hitler's one adjutant came, pulled OB's coat and whispered: "Finish now - you have been talking for two hours."

In conclusion OB said: We have done everything possible to prepare for the attack, but I cannot consider this 120 or 150,000 people as reserves. I also cannot do anything against the losses we shall have. Secondly I doubt the inner morale value of these troops which are made up mostly of recruits, unfit 4 F's, splinter groups, administration troops and so on.

Hitler replied: I', fully aware of the insufficiencies of these troops, but the Russians are fighting with less than standard troops too."

Then he added: Faith and strong belief in success will make up for these deficiencies. You - and he pointed at Heinrici - must radiate this faith, this belief to your troops. If each one is conscious of the fact that this battle should not only be won, but will be won, it will be the greatest success of the war."

As Eismann remembers: OB and I took leave, Hitler shook our hands and we left the room where the fate of Germany was being decided.

When we reached the ante-room we were told that there was an air raid in progress and nobody was to leave the bunker. We sat down at ~~the~~ a table. Nobody said a word. We were thinking about what we had just heard when the all-clear was given and we sat in the ~~x~~ car again. The OB who hadn't said ~~xx~~ a word up to now looked at me very seriously and said: (Soweit ist es mit uns gekommen) That far we have come. Eismann says "I couldn't answer - none was expected.

While the discussion was going on in the Lagerraum, outside in the ante-room the noise increased. The people out there had stopped drinking coffee and were now drinking alcoholic beverages. At one point when the question came up of how to arm the air force, SS and Navy ~~treserves~~ offered by Doenitz, Himmler and Goering, Hitler shouted: "Buhle, Buhle!" (Gen. Buhle was in charge of such questions as armament, ammo, etc.) The ante-room took up this call, shouting "Buhle, Buhle." Finally Buhle arrived smelling of brandy, giving the most stupid replies to Hitler's questions. Says OB: he had a brandy flag in front of him".

After seeing Hitler, OB immediately began organizing defenses from Schwedt to Frankfurt for there Zhukov's army and forces were massing. (~~SH~~ Shortly before the Russians had shot down his last Storch). Every day he visited front, trying to see as many sectors as possible. Gareis writes: "When OB visited me he was very grave about the situation."

Also they saw that Rokossovki's troops in the area between Stettin to Schwedt OB realized they were going to attack all along the front.

All this information came from plane , interception of radio transmissions - (and one big plus was that the Russians stopped all radio transmissions).

Around April 15 U.S. and British appeared on Elbe - we realized we were now between two fronts. Then he asked himself question: Can I as the responsible person fight such a battle? The answer simply was to him that the Russians had to be stopped at all costs on the Oder. I had seen how the Russians had acted in East Prussia and Pomerania, I just couldn't let the civilian population suffer

under a similar happening.

On the other hand I wondered what the English and US would do.

I realized it was impossible to persuade Hitler that everything was lost and that he should capitulate. It was easier to bring the moon down to earth. The Orders were simply to stand on the Oder, attack or no attack.

April 15 Speer came. He said: It is absolutely impossible to make it clear to Hitler that he should give up, I have tried three ~~times~~ times - in October 44, Jan 45 and beginning of March 45. Hitler's reply on that last occasion "If a soldier talked to me this way I would mean he had lost his nerve. He would be shot. In this serious crisis, he said, the military leaders must not lose their nerves. If they do they should be done away with.

It was, nevertheless, in spite of having Russians in front and English and US behind and not having the slightest chance of persuading Hitler, he decided to (kill?? the word is missing in script! HK) Hitler.

Between the 12th and 14th in Birkenheim I told Kinzel: I am going to see Hitler to try and do something.

Kinzel: Why don't you see Busse first, Because he says that his positions are so strong that he can face the attack.

I wasn't surprised but doubtful. He did have good positions- but he did have forces such as the paratroops ~~that~~ that I knew wouldn't hold, anyway, he was vastly outnumbered. In Busse's sector practically every inch of ground was prepared. "It should be remembered that Busse had been in this position since January - and as he was^a first rate general he had taken advantage of the long wait. He had a tremendous advantage over 3rd Pz. - they had fought and been mauled in Pomerania and they were in a sorry state - added to this the commander who had been in charge had been von dem Bach-Zelewsky and he had been terrible.

I went to see Busse at his HQ near Saarow. Busse said: We must hold out positions at the Oder until the Americans reach our rear lines.

OB: I doubt very much that the US will cross the Elbe.

I had known this for a long time - Gehlen had told us so. We knew of the project Eclipse where the four Allies had decided on zones of occupation.

Busse: It's ~~stik~~ absolutely useless to see Hitler.

OB: Then I'll try to see Keitel. Busse: Just as useless, all these types speak the same language.

Before leaving Busse he said: I have to see somebody- Krebs, perhaps - because I cannot accept the situation as it is ~~now~~, I have to try and do something.

I left and went back to Birkenheim. Next day I went to Krebs in Zossen. I did not achieve anything with Krebs. The quintessence of what Krebs said was this: You are in charge of Army Group Vistula. Your sector is the Oder. The rest is our business.

I never knew what was happening on the Elbe or what Schörner was doing.

Eismann wrote: During the last months of the war the word was - nobody should know ~~x~~ even his own orders.

Then the situation therefore was that he had to hold on the Oder. If I started saying this in the end, that we've lost the war- I would run the risk of being shot. If I said that I was not capable of carrying out these orders, then I would be relieved - and somebody who followed Hitler's orders blindly, would take over as was proved when Heinrici was relieved of his command (Toppelk.) "The only possibility that I have, he told Speer, "is to try and fight this battle. But I can assure you of one thing: Berlin will not be another Stalingrad. I shall prevent that.

I could indeed prevent the 3rd Pz. of being lost like at Stalingrad - if K's orders had been carried out, they would have been encircled.

I could not stop the encirclement of the 9th Army - when the 56th Pz. Corps was pulled out by Hitler without my knowledge, and also because Busse followed Hitler's order to remain at the Oder.

It was a vicious order. There was no way ~~xxx~~ out. I said to myself I will do ~~xxx~~ ^{my} duty as a soldier as well as I can and the rest lies in the hands of God.

Suppose Hitler had been killed - this would have led to chaos, SS fighting Wehrmacht, party men fighting all - ~~the~~ ^{the} front would have collapsed and the Russians would have poured into an undefended Berlin.

"You can call it fate of God, but Hitler had to drink the bitter ^{cup} right to the bitter end. For days he was in his death, all wondering if he would be freed - so squashed in as each terrible day passed, that finally he had to commit suicide to end it all. He paid the price. When a man does what he did to his nation, there was no other way out.

April 14th the Russians began enlarging the bridgehead north of Küstrin (2 R.Pz.G.Army) and then they began what OB recognized as a preliminary attack. His troops were forced to move back to their 2nd line. south of Küstrin - there the troops always held right to end.

Couldn't leave order (3rd Pz.Army) because if you moved back to a 2nd line, ~~R~~ Russians would establish bridgeheads. The OB's plan only worked where Russians had bridgeheads.

April 14th attack was an ordinary attack with artillery attack. For 9th this was the beginning and it was heavy. Divisions suffered heavy losses on the 14th.

On the 16th of April he got news from Busse about attack: we had three hours of artillery fire with at least 2,500 artillery pieces, and 1,600 mortars. It was clear after the 14th that the main attack would come 48 hours later.

In the evening of April 15 OB gave orders to Busse : Take up positions into 2nd HKL. Busse complied and on night of 15/16 troops south of Küstrin moved back to 2nd HKL. The barrage of the Russians on the morning of the 16th fell on empty trenches.

On the 16th went to see Doenitz HQ called "Corral" near Bernau, and from there he drove to Wriezen, he drove ~~the~~ along the main road and already they were under Russian fire and they ~~xx~~ reached roadblock, saw horse-drawn carts shot up in narrow opening - and the couldn't get through. While they were cleaning street there was Russian fighter plane attack. Had to abandon car, rush into ruins and he came into a stable where a dying cow was. Bombs were falling. After it was over went down to ~~the~~ Heinersdorf (11th SS Corps) where General Kleinheisterkamp was. Situation didn't look too good there. All of his troops were heavily engaged. Kleinheisterkam had moved out of the beautiful rooms he occupied in the estate and was in the cellar. It was estimated that Russians used 2,000 planes in this area along, 450 Panzer and 450,000 shells during the 16th in this one day.

Thanks to his 2nd HKL the high amount of shelling was out of proportion to the damage done.

Germans shot down 122 planes, 150 panzers during that day.

In 3rd Pz. Army area they also opened artillery attack and indulged in preliminary but it wasn't an all out attack like again the 9th Army. This was merely a feint.

Germans estimated shot 30,000 shells on the 16th.

At the end of the 16th Russians reached hills of Seelow with infantry sustained with panzers.

"In 3rd Army sector Russians have begun very heavy artillery and in certain parts crossed the Oder only reconnaissance troops. The great attack is not expected to take place on 17th. (You can't hide an attack of such strength - OB)

The main points of attack were at Seelow and on Wriezen (3 km east). Front about 80 km.

16/4. south of Frankfurt near Seelow and near Wriezen were main points of attack.

Got a call from Krebs: "We have all reasons to be satisfied"

In a way he wasn't so wrong because considering the size of attack we haven't lost much ground.

OB: You shouldn't praise the day before twilight comes.

But in Schörner's area Koniev had broken through to a depth of 13 km and along

a front of 26 km. On this first day. "In AGW it took three days for Zhukov to do that, but we weren't real soldiers like Schörner."

At this point when the Russians reached Seelow OB really needed 4 panzers that had been sent to Schörner to "save Prague". If we had had them we would have had 7 Panzer and it wouldn't have been fun for the Russians at all.

Before the attack he had wanted to pull out Nordland and Netherland Pz. Div. from 3rd Pz Army to put them in the area of Strausberg-Müncheberg-Wriezen as a Panzer reserve. But Eismann said: If you sent Nordland and Netherland they are going to use up the ~~last~~ last fuel we have. By the time they reach the area they will be immobilized.

I had listened to Eismann and on this occasion that was a big mistake. Later I really missed them badly.

All they had in the area was 25 panzer Grenadier Divisions. Then orders were given to Nordland and Netherland to move down into area (3rd Pz.A. had been using pz. as artillery).

25/4 in the morning towards noon I arrived at my HQ after seeing Manteuffel. there he learned that Steiner couldn't attack, that afternoon as he was supposed to because he wasn't ready.

Already on 22-23 Steiner was supposed to attack from Zerpenschleuse towards Berlin and he had put off the attack with all sorts of excuses and finally attacked two days later.

Steiner on the 25th really had to ~~act~~ act fast - otherwise he would be outflanked by the Russians. So OB was worried, "I got the impression that something was wrong - that Steiner didn't want to attack".

I decided to go and see him.

I drove down to see him by way of Templin. First was to his HQ at Gartz near Gransee. There he met Steiner's Ia. "I wasn't particular satisfied with what he told me. (Somewhere on the road near a village he found a whole column of horse-drawn carts that had been caught in a Russian strafing attack - dead horses men, women and children. It was a dreadful sight. It was the atmosphere of "collapse and breakdown"). ~~Then~~ Then he went to Steiner who was at Nassenheide with the 25th Pz.Gren.Div. There he found Steiner, Jodl and the commander of the 25th Pz., Burmeister. They were at Burmeister's house HQ.

When he arrived I discovered that they had already discussed the attack should be made.

They went over it again - whether it would have any possibility of success and finally

finally they started to talk about condition that Steiner's troops were in. Jodl said: They're in first rate condition. They have very good morale. They are just waiting for the order to attack. Steiner looked at Jodl and made it quite clear that he disagreed.

OB to Steiner: Why aren't you attacking? Why are you postponing again.

Steiner: I just don't have enough troops, I haven't the slightest chance of succeeding.

OB: Well, what do you have?

Steiner: Upmost I have two batt. of 5 Pz. G. Div., 2 batt. of 4th SS police Div., 2 batt. of the 3rd Navy Div. The Navy men I can forget about - they've never been trained for battle. Besides I have hardly any artillery, very few panzers and some anti-aircraft guns. It's a completely mixed-up heap that will never be able to drive from Germendorf to Spandau (about 25 km).

OB: Well, Steiner, you have to attack for your Führer.

Steiner looked a little sheepish.

Steiner: How can I?

OB: As the main thrust you use the Pz. Gren.. Put the sailors on the flank toward Oranienburg - it's open country there. And the Police Battalions on the right flank. First you must enlarge your bridgehead (across the Ruppiner Kanal (less than 1 km)) to set your troops in (It was, says OB less than 1 km). The longer you wait the more Russians arrive. The earlier you attack the faster you will slow down the Russian attack towards west.

At all costs OB wanted to stop the Russians driving west and then north to encircle the entire 3rd Panzer Army. This would have meant "that we couldn't get to the Elbe. So we had to stop it. We didn't know that the Russians in this area were actually driving due west". OB thought they would swing north from Oranienburg.

Manteuffel at this point was already at line Wotan. His upper flank was still at Stettin, the lower at Schwedt, but in between they bulged back to to Wotan line. So OB's idea was not to save the Führer but to stop the Russian drive so that 3rd Panzer Army could retreat in stages to the west and the Elbe. So Steiner's "idea wasn't a good one".

OB knew Steiner would never reach Spandau, but he knew he could secure the very dangerous "corner" with it's main roads running of (name of place illeg.)

north. In essence he simply wanted Steiner to hold while 3rd Pr.A. retreated orderly.

25th Pz. Gren. Div. was originally in Eberswalde and OB had wanted it to move up to Prenzlau. Because he could foresee a Russian breakthrough directly

across the Oder aimed in that direction. But Krebs and Jodl "came up with the brilliant idea of moving them over to Gernsdorf - that was on the 24th after the Russians had attacked!" What argument did I have? Securing Prenzlau was hardly one.

Another argument was that they didn't have enough fuel. Jodl had promised to send the Pz.Div. which was being refitted and it hadn't arrived (got there on the 26th). The end of the talk was that Steiner was to launch an attack to enlarge his bridgehead. Steiner agreed.

9th Army.

74,000 front soldier

capabilities (could be used)

About 10/4. I had to pay him a protocol visit to Goering who at that time was at his HQ at Karinhall which was close to Birkenheim. Went with von Below, extremely impressed by the size of the castle and ground (Goering had his own private zoo). Goering received him - cold but polite. First they discussed the situation and while ~~Goering~~ going over the map Goering suddenly said: I have driven around all your armies and in this sector I've found your men sitting in foxholes playing cards and here I found ~~men~~ men from the Todt Organization who didn't even have spades to do their jobs. And over here people without field kitchens and over here nothing has been done to build defenses - people were loafing around doing nothing."

OB didn't say anything but he knew this was revenge for the paratrooper bit. Goering was dressed in a pale blue Luftwaffe uniform. Had meal. Beer mugs made of silver and sculptures. Then he left and ADC von Below who had eaten with Goering's ADC said that he had been shown the castle and that in the cellar Goering had a huge children's train including a switchboard - Goerings hobby.

When OB left he said to Goering: "I only hope we'll be able to save this beautiful place of yours from the bombing". Goering said nothing.

Four columns of trucks to take Goering's stuff to Berchtesgaden and cellar of Karinhall had been mined to blow it up.

Speer story: The only to make Hitler change his mind is to take a pistol and shoot him dead. But you can't do this, because you can't get near enough - anyway you are searched.

Jodl - Steiner-Heinrici meeting. The whole discussion had lasted a long time and it was now about 5:30. Jodl and OB had to go back a small part of the way on

the same road to get back ~~to~~ to their HQs - so OB thought this was an excellent chance to have a private talk with Jodl. OB: Why don't you come in my car until ways part?

Jodl agreed and they drove off. OB: What do you think of the overall situation - AGW, Wenck and so on. What do you think should be done? OB thought it might be a good thing for once if someone explained to him what was going on, all he got was: "monosyllabic replies - Jodl had built a wall around himself".

The conversation failed. Jodl knew what OB wanted and wasn't going to say a word. But OB knew his remarks hit home. (Later on in the POW camp Jodl tried to excuse himself. "I knew what the situation was. Every day I fought with myself whether to tell Hitler the truth. But I didn't, I couldn't").

OB remembers the day very well in the car, "it was grey, windy, raining and cold. It was day matched to our feeling".

It was a slow, tortuous drive. The road was covered with broken branches, tree trunks and everywhere there was the sad trek of refugees with all their belongings and luggage. Tired, worn out, the (look like: "flotsom and jetsom?)

of defeat. "It was a shameful, sad sight. We saw a small village that was still in flames to our right. Smoke drifted across the fields toward us. Then they saw troops coming towards them. They were walking in the ditches - possibly men of the 25th Pz. Gren. Div. - moving toward Nasserheide where the attack was due to be launched. You could see how tired and worn out they were with fighting spirit left. These men didn't ~~to~~ want to fight anymore.

Also at noon on that day when he had come back from Manteuffel's HQ Russian bombers had hit Prenzlau - it was completely destroyed - "including its beautiful ~~ex~~ church". So "I was still deeply moved by all this terrible destruction".

Turning to Jodl he said: "Look at all of this, why do we still have to go through all this? What are we fighting for?"

Jodl only muttered something "I get no answer". So OB decided to pin him down. OB: Are negotiations under way or what? Jodl was silent for a moment and then said: As long as the Führer is alive there won't be any negotiations.

OB: What do you imagine will happen now if there are no negotiations? Don't you see how things look?

Jodl: We must free the Führer and therefore we must remain at our posts and stick it out.

OB: If we liberate Hitler where do we go from there?

Jodl: Once the Führer is liberated - he'll find a way out.

They reached the parting of their ways. The cars stopped. Jodl got out.

"The goodbye was very cold".

OB was terribly upset, "because Jodl obviously didn't have an answer and didn't

~~have-an~~

know any way out."

Jodl was very happy at revealing "the little he had revealed".

"I still had 1 1/2 hrs. drive in front of me and during the drive all of this passed through my mind. I thought of the complete insanity of having to stay in our positions just to liberate the Führer. That there was no military aim in the whole thing any more. That it was impossible anyway to liberate Hitler. Even if we did - it wouldn't save the situation.

It was then I came to the decision that from now on I would pay no attention to OKW's orders. That I would make my own decisions without asking anyone. - to save as many of our troops as I possibly could.

It wasn't that I had made up my mind to complete disregard ~~the-enemy~~ every OKW order "but I was determined to review every order always with the troops in mind and what they were capable of doing."

There was nothing I could do about the civilians, they were in wild senseless flight to the west and you couldn't give them orders.

When I reached Birkenheim it was dark. When I entered my office the telephone rang. It was 10 p.m.

That morning Manteuffel had "promised me that he could hold his line for just one more day. I was happy and surprised because this gave Steiner the possibility to attack. Through I actually doubted that Manteuffel could hold for another 24 hours.

The call was Manteuffel: "I need your permission to withdraw my troops in the area of Stettin and Schwedt. They have crossed the Randow Bruch (on Wotan Line) (It's a gully and the bottom is a moor) I have to get permission immediately. We must withdraw now otherwise we'll be encircled towards north and south.

When Manteuffel told this suddenly remembered the order issued by Hitler on 19/1. "Every OB was personally responsible to Hitler. NO OB could give permission to withdraw troops or give up positions without notifying Hitler in advance so that Hitler could make the decision.

"I was quiet for a second and then said: Manteuffel withdraw and also give up the fortified place Stettin".

That, recalls OB, was the direct reaction to my talk with Jodl."

I would have been easy "to call the OKW but I decided not to do it, because I vividly remembered how I had fought with OKW for four days to give orders to 9th Army to withdraw. When, when I did get it, it was too late and Busse

was encircled. On top of this every time you tried to get Keitel or Jodl you were told "they have a very important meeting and cannot be disturbed..."

Then I called Trotha and Eismann.

OB to Eismann: Report to OKW that I have ordered the 3rd Army to retreat. I knew it would be too late for OKW to reverse the orders. If I had not given the order the 3rd Pz. Army would have been encircled.

(In England the CofS told him: "If you hadn't we'd have retreated anyway - the situation was hopeless")

Later he discussed with Eismann and v.Trotha the situation "because they had received another wild order from Keitel during my absence in the afternoon." We stood over the map and I explained that the only thing we could do was what I had ordered. Then I looked at Eismann and v.Trotha and said: "What's your opinion?"

Eismann: I think we should retreat behind the Ucker line (3rd) and remain at the Mecklenburg lakes and wait for capitulation - by that time it will have been signed."

v.Trotha almost jumped at the word "capitulation".

TE It is against the honor of a soldier to even think of the capitulation. To even use the word "capitulation". It's not up to us, it's up ~~to~~ to the OKW . giving us the order.

OB stood icy cold and stared at Trotha. When he said: I refuse to carry out these suicidal orders. It is my responsibility for my troops to refuse these orders. I have to give an account for my actions to the German people, but above all God. Good night gentlemen."

There was no sleep for OB. He spent his nights in a chair. He always wore same uniform so his batman always had to wait until he decided to sleep, take the uniform and press it for the next morning. "He was as lazy as sin".

Eismann writes: The day before I had decided not to pass on to OB anything but what I judged he could pass on."

OB didn't know this so next Eismann removed the word "retreat" from every report to OKW. It wasn't ever mentioned but on 26./4. they moved the HQ to Federow (actually a 2nd HQ had already been installed). On the way there he went to see Jodl at Neuroofen south of Neustrelitz.

Neuroefe Federow had been installed by Himmler as one of his "hideouts".

"I told Jodl that I had given the order to 3rd Pz.Army to withdraw. Jodl agreed. But due to the fact that Eismann had not mentioned this in his report to OKW - which Jodl had seen during the night - Jodl later said

that "all the commanders are lying to me, I cannot get any truthful reports".

OB didn't know what he was talking about because he was unaware of Eismann's edited reports.

In the Hitler order of 19./1 he said that all reports that hid or distorted the truth whether purposefully or by negligence that OB's would be punished because they were responsible.

29./4. left Federow to see Toppelkirch to give him Command of the Army Group. He slept at Toppelkirch's HQ. Then he went back to rear HQ at Schwerin and there was Lang - talk with Lang took place there on the 30./4.

(Plön between Lübeck and Kiel).

OB: Lang was afraid that I might suffer the same fate (as Rommel)

I was very surprised, "I thought Rommel had died of his wounds".

Lang said: "No, he was forced to take poison".

I took Lang's advice. I told the driver there was no great rush to get to Plön. On the way I found myself in a of a lot of panzers, to my surprise all seemed to be heading for the Elbe. Took side roads. Got to Plön at end of afternoon. Everything was in great excitement at Plön, nobody even noticed that I had arrived. Von Bila organized a room in some barracks.

OB: Let's go to our rooms and wait for them to call for us, ~~why~~ why should be run over to Doenitz? We can wait to be hanged. We slept there. Next morning still nothing happened. Somehow he heard that Hitler had died. Then he was told they would be $\frac{1}{2}$ all moved to Schleswig-Holstein.

Sat around 1./5. on 2./5. all moved out, "huge columns of cars moving out of Plön north and just as we left a wave of bombers hit the column. It was during this attack that Fieldmarshall von Bock, his wife and daughter were killed.

Von B: I've heard that in Rendsburg ~~we~~ are the English, why ~~don't~~ don't ~~we~~ I tell them you are here (he wanted to go home).

OB: No we're going north towards Flensburg.

Von B: You'll never be able to cross the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal - there are no ferry boats.

OB: We'll see.

They found a ferry boat and they went across. Drove on to Niebüll, "von Bila was mad."

Translation War Diary Army Group Vistula

The following are notes by Lt. Col. ^{H.} von Wienskowski
on Telephone calls conducted on April 20th, 1945

829367

G.F. HOCHRAD 19

HAMBURG - GROSS-FLOTTBEK

April 20

9.50 Supreme Cdr. - Gen. Busse

3 **VOLKSTURM BAT.** to Erkner

2 " " " Rüdersdorf

2 " " " Straussberg } to block off

2 " " " Gr. Werneuchen

B

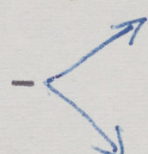
No trace of (Sturm Geschütz Brigade) yet.

Am still of the opinion that Frankfurt has to be given up and ^{that we should} retreats behind lakes, if 9th Army is to be re-grouped before Berlin.

2. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ G. Panzer Army over (prob. "via" - HK) Freudenberg - Tiefensee
- north of Bernau -

At the moment there is no front ^{(Direction of thrust according to} ~~(moving forward following~~
~~(in the original it says 'Beutekarte')~~

captured map)

-  Wandlitz
Mühlenbeck

The Volkssturm Btlns 3,00 + 4,00 have left Berlin, partly motorized, partly on the S-Bahn.

10,00 Ia 3. Pz.A. - Ia

3. despite ceaseless shelling only strong reconnaissance ^{probes,} ~~(Vorstöße)~~
left flank Gartz, right Flank Stettin, ~~XXXXXXXXXX Podeljuch~~
Got across in some places (Gartz, Schillersdorf, Nd. Zahden north of Podeljuch)
Are to be thrown back again.

April 20

10,00 Gen. Fiebig - IA

F. At 9.00 10 tanks in Schönfeld n. Bernau
Others drove back to Bergschul.

10,15 ^{Cdr.} ~~Boss~~ - Ia

^{Cdr.} ~~Boss~~: O.B. (Supreme Commander) intends to request ~~K~~ giving up Frankfurt, which I consider hopeless.⁺ But we do have the right to pull out forces from Frankfurt no matter what. /

(⁺) i.e. the request will have no chance H.K.)

(The rest of the handwritten notes have been crossed out)

12.10 Cdr. 3 Panzer Army Gen. Müller-Hildebrandt - Ia

3. Is (I.A.K. = I. Army Corps) pulling its left flank back ~~to W.~~ ^{toward the west} ~~or is it all right to N?~~ ^{pulling back to the north?} 3.Pz.A. ~~get~~ ^{now has} a deep flank, for which there are no forces.

Ia. For the time being we try to close the gap.

3. Today's attack is already the ~~XXXXXX~~ ^{large scale} attack

1 - 2 hours of art.fire, at first smaller, then ^{enemy} continuously throwing in forces. Strong plane attacks, continuously increasing.

Now bridgeheads

Youth hostel south of Gartz

Unt. Schöningen

Schillersdorf

} here partic.difficult

directly south of Autobahn

Niederzarten

} counter measures under-way. Will hardly get through

12.45 Ia 9th Army - Ia

9. Don't think the gap can be closed

16.30 Gen. Krebs - Boss

K. Führer wants to know immediately which parts of ~~artl.~~ the artl. must ^{remain stationary} ~~stay~~ (prob. "be left behind" - HK) when carrying out the approved movement of the 9th Army.

April 20

18,30 Cdr. 9th Army - Ia

Ia Sorry- couldn't reach you before

Any news on situation?

9. Enemy is before Bernau,

situation in Werneuchen unclear

will continue report in a moment, here ^{our only} ~~only~~ air attack.

18.35 Cdr. 9th Army - Ia

H. ^{order} Order that has been given, cannot be executed.Army is to take over 80 kilometers of (Abschirmungs-) screening front of a front which is ^{just} short of crumbling.~~Incomprehensible~~ ^{South rim} ~~can't understand~~ that the ~~borders~~ of the Spreewald is to be held.Ia. I share your views, but the order has been given whether we understand it or not. Don't know what to do either, never in my life have I seen anything like it. I too only have the ^{draft} ~~pre~~ order ^{from} ~~of the~~ O.K.H., ~~order~~ not the final version yet.H. Can't see any way out.IA. I don't either. Gen. Kinzel says there is no chance of changing the order, we have to make the best of it.H. We have lost control over the area of Fürstenwalde.

Situation Fürstenwalde - Hangelsberg unclear.

Defense Area Berlin reports that no attacks have been reported.

Hangelsberg is being attacked from north to south. Enemy tries to cross the Spree. Enemy attacks northern part of Fürstewalde.

Enemy attacks with smaller units not far from Fürstenwalde.

April 20

19.15 Major von Freytag (with Gen.Krebs) - Ia

Fr. Where is Busse going?Ia. for time being will stay in . Then will move behind the center of his army, probably a little further to the south.

19.40 Harnack - Major v. Freytag

Fr: Did you find O.B. (Supreme Cdr.)H: He is with the 101 Army Corps with whom we have no connections, we are looking for him.

20.25 General Krebs - Ia.

K. Führer points out:

1. ~~Take out 3. Mar. D. (?) speed up~~ *Accelerate disengagement of 3d Mar. Div.*
and put behind right flank 9th Army
2. (too abbreviated and illegible) heights near Freienwalde must be held.

IA. Has been ordered. is to be held.K. 101 K. Rgt. Solmar

3. Forces as fast as possible
 4. Parts 25th to attack toward the south? Think it over.
 5. Wachregt. G.D. is to remain near Werneuchen.
- Situation Bernau - Werneuchen threatened, attacker from southwest too.

(continued on next page)

Clean up.

Ia 101 has been taken over by 3rd Panzer Army

" "

has already established conn.

9th Army cannot contact 101th.

K. I'm afraid that ~~by~~ putting 101th under 3rd Panzer A. will result in withdrawal of right flank of 3rd Panzer Ar. Supply ~~trucks~~^{columns} are already retreating in northwesterly direction and not toward west.

(next sentence illegible, unclear)

Request that O.B. reports to OKH soon.

April 20 (Actually 21 - HK)

24.30 O.B. informs Gen. Krebs that he has received the order that the Army Group must hold the frontline in its present position while pulling out all forces possible for the support of the heavily threatened deep flank. He regrets this decision with all his heart, since he is firmly convinced that this order cannot be ~~x~~ carried out and will never be successful. He also regrets the decision because it has no chance ^{of success} and is thus directed against the interests of the Führer himself. Actually, he ^(O.B.) should go to the Führer and tell him: "Mein Führer, since this order endangers your well-being, I request you to relieve me of this duty and to transfer it onto somebody ~~x~~ else. Then I could do my duty as a Volksturm man and fight the enemy!"

Gen. Krebs replied that the Führer ~~in~~ however ~~in~~ expected that following his order everything would be done ^{to close and} ~~for the closing and~~ ^{set up a continuous} ~~building-up of a (zusammenhängende)~~ front while pulling out all forces that can be made available, ~~as far east as possible~~ with no consideration for Berlin, ^{as far east as possible.}

JAF check.

Night 20th to 21st

00.20 Dethleffsen - O.B.

O.B. The front between Oranienburg and Spandau will be occupied tomorrow by ~~the~~ (troops to be brought in there)

from Liebenwalde
Zerpenschleuse }

Steiner with 5 Pz.

Btl.

the ~~115~~ ^{rec. troops} 115

1 Army engineer Btl.

2 SS Pol. Btl.

5 batteries

in the course of the afternoon ^{launch} attack toward south, against enemy tank ^{division} advancing toward west, attacking his flanks

South of Stetting Bridge (head?) tightened, holding enemy.

Kottbus enemy penetrated from northwest

Lübben fighting too

Enemy tanks and infantry

through security circle of Reymann (BERLIN)

a) west. Zossen (Mellen-See toward north)

b) north of Luckenwalde towards Trebbin 65 tanks + inf.

Gen. Busse - ~~unavailable~~ heavy attacks against left flank, caved in

Deep inroads with 11th SS and south of Frankfurt

Will have to renew request tomorrow.

Enemy between Hoppegarten) enemy has taken up positions, ready for attack
Schildow) before outer ring +)

+) the author prob. refers to
"the outer defense ring" of Berlin